

Remarks/Arguments

Amendments to the Claims

Applicants have amended Claim 2 to recite the limitations presented for Claim 2 in the Amendment and Request for Reconsideration dated July 5, 2006 (hereinafter referred to as the July 5 Amendment) and to recite the limitations of allowable Claim 17 (and intervening Claim 5) as presented in the July 5 Amendment.

In the July 5 Amendment, Claim 2 recited both a "center portion" and a "center section." For the sake of consistency, Applicants have left lines 6 and 7 of Claim 2 to recite: "center section."

The Rejection of Claims 2-5, 7-9, 11-13, and 15 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claims 2-5, 7-9, 11-13, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 3,355,181 (Olson) in view of United States Patent No. 2,580,546 (Hobson). Applicants traverse the rejection as follows.

Applicants have amended Claim 2 to recite the limitations presented for Claim 2 in the July 5 Amendment and to recite the limitations of objected Claim 17 (and intervening Claim 5) as presented in the July 5 Amendment.

In the July 5 Amendment, the Examiner stated that Claim 17 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated that this claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In the Final Office Action of September 17, 2007, the Examiner also stated that Claim 17 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated that this claim would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 17 is an original claim. Claim 5 has not been amended since the July 5 Amendment. Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments made to Claim 2 in the replies filed after the July 5 Amendment up to and including the reply filed June 20, 2007 have not

affected the relationship between Claim 2 and Claim 17. That is, the combination of Claims 2, 5, and 17 has remained allowable in each Office Action following the July 5 Amendment, regardless of the amendments made to Claim 2 in the aforementioned replies. Therefore, Claim 2 as amended in the present paper to recite the limitations presented for Claims 2, 5, and 17 in the July 5 Amendment is allowable.

For all the reasons noted above, Claim 2 is patentable over Olson and Hobson. Claims 3, 4, 7-9, 11-13, and 15, dependent from Claim 2, also are patentable over the cited references. Claim 5 has been cancelled.

Applicants courteously request that the rejection be removed.

The Objection of Claims 17, 19, and 20 as Being Dependent Upon a Rejected Base Claim

Claims 17, 19, and 20 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended Claim 2 to recite the limitations of Claim 17 and intervening Claim 5 as described *supra*. Therefore, Claim 17 no longer depends from a rejected base claim. Since amended Claim 2 is allowable, Claims 19 and 20 no longer depend from a rejected base claim.

Applicants courteously request that the objection be removed.

Conclusion

Applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance, which action is courteously requested. The Examiner is invited and encouraged to contact the undersigned agent of record if such contact will facilitate an efficient examination and allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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